

Message Text

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SUBJECT: TINDEMANS SELECTS NEW MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS,
TWO PROVINCIAL GOVERNORS

1. PALACE COMMUNIQUE JULY 31 ANNOUNCED SHIFT OF LOUIS OLIVIER (PLP) FROM MINISTRY FOR MIDDLE CLASSES TO MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS. REPLACING OLIVIER AS MINISTER FOR MIDDLE CLASSES IS LEON HANNOTTE (PLP). VACANCY AT PUBLIC WORKS WAS CAUSED BY JULY 30 RESIGNATION OF JEAN DEFRAIGNE (PLP).

2. BORN AT DISCON MARCH 21, 1922, LOEN HANNOTTE SERVED AS MINISTER FOR MIDDLE CLASSES FROM JANUARY TO OCTOBER 1973 IN LEBURTON GOVERNMENT. DURING LAST THREE YEARS HANNOTTE CONTINUED TO SERVE AS DEPUTY FOR MONS, PRESIDENT OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON MIDDLE CLASSES, AND SECOND VICE PRESIDENT OF THE HOUSE. A LAWYER BY PROFESSION, HANNOTTE HAS BEEN ACTIVE IN THE LIBERAL (PLP) PARTY SINCE 1961. HIS RE-APPOINTMENT AS MINISTER FOR THE MIDDLE CLASSES HAS BEEN WELCOMED BY MIDDLE CLASS ORGANIZATIONS. SEE BIO DATA FORM FS-405 FEB. 2, 1973.

3. TAKING THE OATH OF OFFICE ON THE SAME DAY AS HANNOTTE WAS YVAN ROGGEN (PLP), NEWLY-APPOINTED GOVERNOR OF THE PROVINCE OF BRABANT, SUCCEESING JEAN DE NEEFF (PSC).

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DESIGNATED, BUT NOT YET SWORN IN, IS JACQUES PLANCHARD (PSC)

WHO IS TO BE GOVERNOR OF THE PROVINCE OF LUXEMBOURG
SUCCEEDING MAURICE BRASSEUR (PSC), WHOSE MANDATE EXPIRES AUGUST 31.

4. NEITHER OF THE TWO NEWLY-DESIGNATED GOVERNORS HAS BEEN ACTIVE
RECENTLY IN BELGIAN POLITICAL LIFE.
PLANCHARD (AGED 47) HAS SERVED FOR THE PAST 18 YEARS AS AN
OFFICIAL OF THE EUROPEAN COAL AND STEEL COMMUNITY. ROGGEN
(AGED 54) HAS BEEN SERVING AS "AUDITEUR GENERALE A LA COUR MILITAIRE"
(JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL).

5. COMMENT:
DEFRAIGNE'S RESIGNATION, ATTRIBUTED VARIOUSLY TO PERSONAL
REASONS, POOR HEALTH AND PRINCIPLED PROTEST AGAINST ROUGH
CABINET TREATMENT OF HIS 1977 PUBLIC WORKS BUDGET REQUESTS,
PROBABLY HAD MOST TO DO WITH HIS POLITICAL HEALTH IN HIS
HOMETOWN OF LIEGE. DEFRAIGNE HEADS THE LIBERAL PARTY LIST
WHICH LIEGE VOTERS WILL PASS ON IN OCTOBER COMMUNAL ELECTIONS.
SINCE THE LIBERALS HAVE ENTERED INTO AN UNHOLY ALLIANCE IN LIEGE
WITH THEIR IDEOLOGICAL ADVERSARIES, THE SOCIALIST PARTY,
AGAINST THE CHRISTIAN SOCIALISTS, DEFRAIGNE'S MEMBERSHIP IN A
CHRISTIAN-LED CABINET HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY AWKWARD FOR
HIM. HE MAY WELL HAVE ACTED ON THE MAXIM THAT, IN BELGIAN
POLITICS, THERE IS ALWAYS ANOTHER CABINET BUT LOSS OF YOUR
POLITICAL BASE BACK HOME IN THE END.

6. WHILE THERE WAS NEVER A QUESTION OF THE WITHDRAWAL
OF PLP SUPPORT FROM THE TINDEMANS COALITION, IT DOES APPEAR
THAT THE PLP WAS ABLE TO EXACT A PRICE FOR THE SMOOTH FILL-IN
BEHIND DEFRAIGNE. THE PRICE SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN A PLP INCUMBENT
AS GOVERNOR OF BRABANT - A POST PREVIOUSLY FILLED BY A PSC
STALWART.

7. OLIVIER'S LONG-RUMORED DEPARTURE FROM THE MIDDLE CLASSES
MINISTRY MIGHT AFFECT PROSPECTS FOR RESOLUTION OF THE STATUS
OF AMERICAN LAWYERS IN BELGIUM.
HANNOTTE DEALT WITH THE ISSUE IN HIS 1973 EXPERIENCE WITH THE
MIDDLE CLASSES PORTFOLIO AND WAS NOT INVOLVED IN THE EFFORTS
TO DEVELOP A NEW PROTOCOL.
A SENIOR MEMBER OF THE MINISTRY OF THE MIDDLE CLASSES WITH WHOM
WE DISCUSSED OLIVIER'S PROSPECTIVE DEPARTURE BEFORE HANNOTTE'S
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APPOINTMENT, BELIEVES THE WORK ON THE DRAFT PROTOCOL HAS
PROGRESSED SO FAR THAT IT IS LIKELY THAT A NEW MINISTER WOULD
CONTINUE CONSIDERING STEPS IN THIS DIRECTION. RENNER

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